

# And Jesus Said, "Go Forth Into All the World and Sample The Truths of All Religions"

O.K., Jesus didn't really say that. But wouldn't it be nice if He had? We could dabble in the world's religions and — since their truth claims and practices often contradict one another — we could just pick what we like from each and leave the rest.

We already have "designer" this and that. Why not a designer religion to suit each individual's fancy?

Yes, we know, there's a slight problem. With what authority could we concoct our own religion? Someone said that if you want to start your own religion, get yourself crucified and rise on the third day.

So, what did Jesus actually say? Known as the Great Commission, here it is: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Mt. 28:19-20).

All other religions deny that Jesus was given "all authority in heaven and on earth." So either this Jesus is who He says He is or He's a crazed megalomaniac. If He's the latter, you really couldn't trust anything He said. If He is who He says He is, that means missionary work, evangelization, and witnessing by word and deed.

But there are lots of lukewarm Laodicean Chris-

tians (Rev. 3:14-16) who don't want to proclaim the Gospel, but don't want to let go of Jesus altogether. They'd rather do social work and engage in interreligious dialogue, searching for some greater, more agreeable truth that has so far eluded everyone.

In the Catholic Church the result has been the waning of the missionary spirit. Yes, the word "evangelization" is still used, but there's little sense anymore that anyone really needs Jesus, that anyone could gain the whole world and lose his soul (Mt. 16:26). Contrary to Church teaching, evangelization now basically means working for a better world.

But Jesus warned that the road to destruction is broad and comfortable, and the road to salvation is narrow and difficult (Mt. 7:13-14). Do Christians care anymore? The Southern Baptists do. The Pope does. And so do we. We are the *NEW OXFORD REVIEW*, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine that doesn't shy away from the "hard" teachings of Jesus.

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